



NORTH UNION LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT LEARNING THAT SECURITY INTEGRATION IS ESSENTIAL

North Union Local School District serves approximately 1500 students in grades preschool through grade 12 on a campus comprised of one elementary school, a new middle school and high school. The district geographically lies in Richwood, Ohio, northwest of the greater Columbus metropolitan area and busses the majority of its students in from the outlying rural areas.

North Union just built a new middle school and recently finished a new addition on its high school. Five years ago, a security system was installed in the new elementary school, but administrators were disappointed with its video quality and lack of features. The completion of the high school renovation prompted them to look for a new solution.

Being in a rural county and conscious of the ever-changing school environment, North Union administrators conducted a comprehensive training session with Union County's first responders. A simulated shooter and student actors were used to enact a school shooting. The simulation demonstrated how school officials and first responders would respond. The exercise demonstrated the school's weaknesses and helped determine what security procedures and technology were needed to keep students safe.

As a result, district administrators learned they must limit access. Students must enter through one set of doors, and camera coverage should be literally everywhere, including the parking lots and in the back of the school. The simulation taught administrators that to achieve their goals, they needed to have the following security procedures in place:

- Video recording. Cameras needed to cover every part of the high school.

- Video storage. Retrieving video to review an incident was a critical factor.
- Integration with DMP's intrusion system. Internal doors and specified areas of the building should have monitoring points integrated with the access control system to provide a complete security management system.

"North Union wanted a state-of-the-art system that had the capacity to do whatever they wanted it to do," said Johnson Controls, Inc. Lead Systems Specialist, Michael J. McGlone. "Full integration with DMP alarm panels was important, but the highest priority was the video recording capability."

North Union chose to install an G4S Technology Symmetry Enterprise Security Management System with Symmetry Video Management. Approximately 130 fixed dome and pan/tilt/zoom network cameras from Axis Communications were placed on this networked system to provide an "eyes everywhere" security system for the high school. The new middle school installed 110 cameras. The district chose specific models for their rugged, vandal resistant construction and high image quality, as well as their motion detection capabilities. Symmetry Video Management software records video and it is stored in a 40 terabyte Nexan unit. Johnson Controls, Inc. installed the system.

"Symmetry Video integrates to DMP so they communicate over the network," said McGlone. "The district doesn't have to administer alarm panels separately – it's done in the Symmetry software. Alarms go to both a central station and Symmetry user screen."



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New Security Measures

The Symmetry Video Management System with its advanced feature set, along with the high-resolution Axis network cameras and DMP intrusion integration allowed the high school to restructure its security practices based on the school's needs discovered during the training session.

An authorized staff member arms and disarms the system every day before students and staff arrive. When buses arrive in the morning, the high school front doors open for 20 minutes to allow students to enter. Then all doors are locked from the inside for the remainder of the day.

“The secretarial entrance has double doors with a vestibule. After the doors are locked for the day, people push a button to be buzzed in the vestibule and then buzzed into the office,” said North Union Local School District, Director of Technology, Pam Earp. “An image is shown on a screen and the school secretary can decide whether or not to buzz the person through.”

Staff members wear ID badges that are used to gain access to the school's exterior doors. Interior hallways are secured with over 30 motion detectors that integrate with G4S's Symmetry System. The office utilizes door contacts on every door and motion detectors for protection. Parents and business people who need to only visit the high school office are not required to obtain a badge, however substitute teachers, contractors and volunteers are required to sign in and obtain cards to properly identify themselves and show they are permitted in the school building.

The principal and assistant principal monitor certain cameras at all times in their offices. They picked the areas of the school they felt needed more monitoring including hallways, stairwells, and the school parking lot.

Axis pan/tilt/zoom network cameras sit outside the high school and middle school to monitor the football field, parking lots and areas between the buildings. With their exceptional pan and tilt range and their superior optical and digital zoom, staff finds that the cameras help them to easily track and identify students involved in suspicious behavior. As a result, administrators have been able to reduce fighting and smoking outside, and to monitor students walking back and forth between buildings for tutoring. The elementary school's old

security system does not include PTZ exterior cameras and the cameras they do use are a lower resolution and record a fuzzy image. A retrofit will occur this year to install Symmetry Video.

Convenience

Teachers are required to wear the ID card, which doubles as their access card. As an added convenience, all staff was given a key fob to put on their key ring. “We found that the staff often left their cards on their desks, and therefore it was easier to also provide a key fob for their key ring,” said Earp. “Since everyone has their keys when they enter the building, it just made sense. The teachers love the convenience of using either card or key fob.”

With the old elementary school security system, there was no way to print on the programmed cards, so staff were forced to have two badges – one for access and one ID badge. The ID badges were printed on blank cards by an off site company. With Symmetry, they purchase pre-programmed ID cards and print badges with the Fargo printer that came with their system. They really like the convenience of printing badges in-house.

“Our goal is to have a printer in every building and train each school secretary to print the badges,” said Earp. The district took the system one step further and printed each person's library barcode on their access card to have a one stop shop badge. Teachers enjoy the convenience of reaching for their ID card to check out books.



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